(b) to (e) The Employees' Provident Fund launched a project called 'Re-Inventing EPF India' in order to provide world-class service to its stakeholders by revamping the accounting procedure, business process, etc., which would enable the claims to be settled within 2-3 days, improved compliance and to provide service on 'Any-time Any-where' basis.

The consultants appointed for this work delivered their report on 'Business Process Re-engineering', System Design Document, 'Software Requirement Specifications', etc. The application software was also delivered. On exhaustive user testing and field testing, the application was found to be needing considerable improvements. To set right the deficiencies, the consultants have asked for changes in contract and financial compensation. The Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund have considered the above and have given directions to explore alternate options and also to take legal opinion as regards the present situation.

The reasons for delay are the delayed submission of some milestones by the consultants as well as time taken for various approvals. Siemens Information Systems Limited (SISL) were engaged as consultants for the Project for an amount of Rs. 6, 67, 47, 000/-. Apart from this, no other cost estimates were finalised.

The time frame would be fixed as soon as the appropriate option is approved by the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation.

Statement

Details of members and investment of the Employees Provident fund for the period 2001-2007

(Un-exempted Establishments)

Year ending	No. of members (In lakhs)	Investment at face value (Rs. in Crores)
31st March 2001	220.40	54404.66
31st March 2002	235.21	59988.44
31st March 2003	357.47	65413.73
31st March 2004	363.75	71838.60
31st March 2005	372.13	79764.48
31st March 2006	389.88	90438.36
31st March 2007	404.03	103837.36

Implementation of NREG Scheme in the whole country

†*26. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:
SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed to implement the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) from April, 2008 in the whole country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(b) if so, the steps taken for successful implementation of this scheme;

(c) whether complaints have also been received that irregularities are being committed in the implementation of this scheme; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to check irregularities in the implementation of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was launched in 200 districts in the country in the first phase on 2.2.2006. It was extended to 130 additional districts in its second phase in the current financial year. All the remaining rural areas in the country have been notified for coverage under the Act with effect from 1.4.2008.

(b) and (d) Ministry has taken the following measures for successful implementation of the Scheme and to check irregularities in its implementation.

(i) Generating Awareness

Various steps have been taken to generate awareness about NREGA. Gram Sabhas and one day orientation of all Sarpanches at the Block level have been held. Local vernacular newspapers, radio, TV, films and cultural forms are being used for the purpose. Leaflets and brochures in local language are being provided. Village camps have been organized by the District teams and NGOs and Self help Groups are being associated in the awareness generation.

(ii) Staffing/Training

Capacity building for rural development functionaries and Panchayati Raj functionaries is an essential pre-requisite for better implementation of rural development programmes. NREGA guidelines provide that a dedicated Gram Rojgar Sahayak (GRS) should be appointed in each Gram Panchayat and a dedicated Programme officer should be appointed at Block level for NREGA works besides other technical and non-technical staff. So far 79249 GRS and 1685 Programme Officers have been recruited. Besides, 11464 technical staff and 10109 other non-technical staff has also been recruited for NREGA. Regarding training, so far 927766 Panchayati Raj functionaries, 177031 Government functionaries and 246655 Members of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMC) have been trained under NREGA.

(iii) People's Participation

(i) Village level monitoring committees have been set up and trained.

(ii) Non Governmental Organisations are being involved for awareness generation under NREGA.

(iii) Gram Sabhas are held

(iv) Vigilance and Monitoring

(i) Implementation of NREG Act is monitored on regular basis. Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have been set up at State as well as district levels. Local MPs are the members of the district Vigilance and Monitoring Committees. Members of the Central Employment Committees have also been set up for local monitoring. Members of the Central Employment Guarantee Council also undertake field visits to various districts. National Level Monitors (NLMs) and Area Officers visit various districts to oversee the progress of the Act.

(ii) Muster Roll verification has to be done in a campaign mode and consolidated reports sent to the Ministry.

(v) Transparency

(i) States have been directed to conduct social audit of each and every work of NREGA within three months. Members of the Central Employment Guarantee Council are actively participating in the Social audit. Social Audit has been done in 53911 Gram Panchayats.

(ii) A Citizen Information Board has been introduced. This board is to be displayed at all prominent places. This will enable the local community to know the works being undertaken under NREGA and would also facilitate the process of spreading awareness about the programme.

(vi) MIS

A comprehensive Web-based MIS www.nrega.nic.in has been implemented which places all data in public domain. This data pertains to workers, entitlements like registration, Job cards, muster rolls, employment demanded and provided; work data like sanctioned shelf of works, work estimates, work in progress, measurement; Financial indicators like funds available/spent, amount paid as wages, materials and administrative expenses. Data software has been engineered for cross vertification of records and for report generation.

(c) Yes, Sir. Some complaints have been received regarding implementation of NREGA. These have been forwarded to the concerned State Government for appropriate action.

Resumption of Arms Supply to Nepal

*27. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Nepal's Army Chief visited New Delhi in December 2007, met Indian leaders and made a pitch for India resuming arms supplies to Nepal;

(b) if so, in what specific areas of arms supplies, he sought Indian arms supplies; and

(c) Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The Chief of Army Staff, Nepalese Army visited India from December 9-16, 2007 to participate in the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. There was an exchange of views on various issues concerning India's long standing Defence Cooperation with Nepal.

SEZs in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra

†*28. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) sanctioned for Maharashtra and the number of SEZs, out of these, to be set up in the Vidarbha region;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi